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Ohio court hands down precedent-setting decision

Ruling that a state domestic violence law applies to lesbians and gay men in addition to heterosexuals, an appellate court broadens the legal definition of spousal relationships

By Chris Nealon

COLUMBUS, Ohio—The fight for recognition of non-traditional families got a boost recently, with a court decision here that expands the definition of spousal relationships. Overturning an earlier trial court decision, an Ohio appellate court ruled March 26 that the state's domestic violence statute applies to all people who are living together "regardless of their sex." Legal activists say that the ruling is the first of its kind in the U.S.

The case first came before a court in August 1990, when Ellensara Evans filed criminal charges against her domestic partner, Carol Hadinger. A trial court judge dismissed the charges against Hadinger, saying that Ohio's domestic violence law did not apply to the two women, even though the law includes those "who live as spouses" or "otherwise cohabit." In its March decision, however, the appellate court said it "decline[d] to adopt such a restrictive position."

'Double whammy'

"This is a very important statement that the law will protect us in our own homes," said Paula Ettelbrick of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Aside from protecting lesbians and gay men from domestic violence, Ettelbrick told *GCN*, the Ohio case will also have an effect on domestic partnership struggles. In particular, she said the decision is important because it chips away at narrow definitions of domestic partnership. "What the court basically did is interpret the language, 'living as a spouse' to include lesbian and gay relationships," she said. "It's a double whammy."

Ettelbrick said she thinks that legal definitions of domestic partnership will gradually be expanded by decisions like this one. Although many lesbian and gay activists favor directly lobbying for marriage and domestic partnership rights, said Ettelbrick, it is more likely that an inclusive legal definition of family will emerge as a side effect of battles around other issues. "These interpretations are where we're going to do it," she continued.

Ettelbrick said that in addition to the Ohio ruling, struggles around rent control have had an effect on the definition of domestic partnership. In July 1989 the New York State Supreme Court ruled that Miguel Braschi, a gay man, should be allowed to continue to live in his deceased lover's rent-controlled apartment, even though Braschi's name was not on the lease. (See *GCN*, Vol. 17, No. 2) The decision in *Braschi vs. Stahl Associated* has since been hailed as a milestone in the fight for full domestic partnership rights for lesbians and gay men.

'No theory'

"I think the ruling is tremendously significant," said Carol Fey, an attorney with the Ohio Human Rights Bar Association, a network of lesbian and gay lawyers. Not only is the decision the first of its kind in the U.S., Fey told *GCN*, but "so far no case [has gone] the other way."

In addition, Fey said, "after this it will be clear" that what is important in domestic violence cases is the violence and not the sexual orientation of the people involved.

Fey, who worked on the case with Lambda, said she couldn't understand why the lower court dismissed the charges in the first place. "I have no theory other than that [the judge] apparently did not read the law just before rendering his decision," she said.

Ettelbrick said she also was surprised that the case had to go to an appellate court before the two women's relationship could be recognized. "What I found so outrageous," she said, "is that the trial court judge failed to recognize that [Evans] was living in a violent relationship in her own home. Instead he spent his time obsessing about her lesbian relationship."

An 'unacknowledged' problem

Lesbian and gay activists in Ohio say they hope the ruling will have the practical effect of opening up discussions about domestic violence. "We think it's real important," said Chris Cozad, president of Stonewall Union, a Columbus-based activist organization. "I think we need to focus on domestic violence as well as on the violence that comes from outside our community," he said.

Gloria McCauley, Stonewall's anti-violence project coordinator, said she agreed with Cozad. She added, however, that lesbians and gay men often do not want to discuss domestic violence. "Many people want to ignore it," McCauley told *GCN*. Often, she said, lesbians and gay men fear that discussing domestic violence in the open will make their communities vulnerable to heterosexual critics. Because lesbian and gay people have so often been portrayed as pathological or violent, McCauley said, "Some people say, 'It just reinforces stereotypes.'"

McCauley said, however, that addressing domestic violence is a priority for Stonewall Union, and that it was an important issue even before the recent ruling. For instance, she said, Stonewall sponsored an extremely popular series of workshops on violence in lesbian relationships. McCauley added that this year the group hoped to start a similar series involving gay male relationships.

In the meantime, McCauley said, she thinks the court case will encourage lesbians and gay men in Ohio to seek legal protection

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The New Festival National Gay and Lesbian Film Tour comes to Boston

A behind-the-scenes look at the politics of programming and the importance of queer audiences.

Artists sue NEA

Four artists who were denied grants from the National Endowment for the Arts charge the agency with discrimination and de facto censorship

By Elizabeth Yukins

LOS ANGELES—The ongoing battle between artistic freedom and federal funding entered a new stage March 18, when four artists and an arts organization challenged the constitutionality of the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) "decency standard."

The artists, with the aid of numerous civil libertarian organizations, charge that the federally mandated decency stipulation violates artists' freedom of expression rights. They also argue that the decency standard is so vague and broad that it invites subjective and arbitrary enforcement.

The statute at issue is a 1990 amendment to the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act that stipulates that all federally funded artwork must be deemed acceptable under "general standards of decency." Congress left the definition of decency open to judicial review, but stated that artistic merit should be judged with "respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

Opponents of the provision say that these new grant conditions amount to censorship. "It is intolerable to have the vague and chilling language of the decency standard repressing artistic expression," said Phil Gutis of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "Decisions to award grants should be made solidly on artistic merit, not on over-broad and very vague decency terminology," he told *GCN*.

The national and Southern California chapters of the ACLU, along with the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, and the Center for Constitutional Rights, are participating in the case. The plaintiffs are also suing the NEA for violating their privacy rights by illegally disclosing confidential grant application information to the press.

Art and politics

The suit against the NEA and its chair, John Frohnmayer, was filed by Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller, and the National Association of Artists' Organizations. The four individual plaintiffs are all performance artists whose grant

applications were denied by the NEA in June of 1990. The March 18 suit is an amended version of a complaint filed by the artists last September charging the NEA with discrimination based on political biases.

In the original draft of the suit, the artists allege that their applications were denied because Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and his right-wing constituents pressured the NEA to refrain from granting funds to controversial artists. The four artists charge that they each had been unanimously approved for a grant by the NEA's peer review panels. They say that despite the approval, Frohnmayer pressured his constituents to reject their applications because their works address explicit sexual and homoerotic themes.

Just prior to the plaintiffs' application reviews, the NEA had come under sharp Congressional scrutiny for its funding of the controversial Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano exhibits. (See *GCN*, Vol. 18, No. 3.) Helms had waged a powerful campaign against federal tax dollars funding what he called "obscene artwork," and the NEA was struggling to defend and justify its existence. According to the four plaintiffs, the NEA succumbed to political pressures and rejected their applications to avoid any more negative controversy.

The artists amended their suit March 18 to include a challenge to the decency standard Congress instituted in November of 1990. "If [the decency provision] is removed," said Finley, "the NEA could return to its proper and required mission: to give grants based solely on artistic merit and not based on political pressures, ideologies, sexual preferences, or any other preferences."

'Branded as indecent'

Although no one has been denied a grant under the decency standard, opponents of the provision say that it establishes a dangerous and repressive precedent. "The decency standard has a two-fold impact," said Mary Dorman, an attorney for the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression. "First, some artists will not apply [for the grants] at all for fear of having themselves and their

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Quote of the week

"I do not anticipate crashing the conference and turning this into an international incident, nor do I intend to file any public-accomodations discrimination complaints.

"But I certainly hope to see the day in my lifetime when lesbians no longer feel so utterly oppressed by society that they perceive their only option to be to respond to sexism with more blatant sexism."

—Gay syndicated journalist Rex Wockner, in a press release from Outlines News Service, which Wockner refers to as a "one-man operation." According to Wockner, organizers of the upcoming National Lesbian Conference in Atlanta responded to his request for press credentials by saying, "The policy is that men aren't invited to be a part of the conference...We're trying to create a safe space for all lesbians to come together." Replied Wockner, "I guess I just don't understand how inclusion and integration create unsafe space."

Restrictive anti-choice bill vetoed

BISMARCK, N.D.—Pro-choice activists here won an important victory April 1 when Gov. George Sinner vetoed a highly restrictive abortion bill that had been passed by the state's legislative assembly. The proposed bill would have banned all abortions except in cases of rape, incest or endangerment of a woman's life.

"History is full of accounts of the misuse of governmental power, often for a 'good' cause," said Skinner, a Democrat, in his veto message. "Government must not overstep its bounds. It must not play God," he added.

Sinner's veto was sustained by the state House of Representatives April 2, when anti-abortion legislators were unable to garner the two-thirds majority vote needed to override the veto.

"This was definitely the worst piece of legislation [the right wing] has ever tried to get passed," said Linn Gifford, president of the North Dakota chapter of the National Abortion Rights Action League. She told GCN, "They've been trying this kind of stuff for 12 years, but the majority of the people [in this state] are pro-choice. It's very much a privacy issue out here."

Gifford said that while abortion rights activists are happy that Sinner vetoed one restrictive bill, they are angry that he signed another bill that institutes a parental consent law for minors seeking abortions. The new law also establishes a 24-hour waiting period between the time a woman requests an abortion and the time the procedure is performed.

"Out here, where women sometimes have to travel up to 500 miles to get to [the state's only abortion clinic], this new law will have a really restrictive effect," said Gifford, adding, "Young women, in particular, will lose a tremendous amount of access [to the clinic], because they will have to come up with excuses to spend 48 hours away from home, and will have to have a lot more money to pay for an overnight stay at a motel."

According to Gifford, the American Civil Liberties Union plans to file legal complaints against the parent consent law in the near future.

—Elizabeth Yukins

Demonstrators target Catholic educators

BOSTON—Over 100 demonstrators gathered outside the annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association on April 1 to protest the Catholic Church's positions on women's rights and AIDS issues. The demonstration, organized by ACT UP/Boston and the Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2), was intended to alert Catholic teachers to the dangers of not addressing sexuality concerns, such as birth control, abortion, HIV transmission and sexual orientation.

Hilary Roberts, a member of R2N2, told GCN that protestors wanted to confront Catholic educators with the realities of AIDS and abortion. "Hopefully some of them will begin to think about what they're teaching young people," said Roberts. "Their commitment to their belief is fine," she added, "but if people can begin to think about sexuality and how it affects them, then maybe this will have a positive impact."

About 15,000 people attended the annual convention, which is the largest gathering of Catholic educators in the world. Although conference participants had to pass by the demonstration in order to board their buses, there was little interaction with the protestors. Most conference attendees hurried by the action, and many refused to

take leaflets that protestors were attempting to distribute.

Yet some educators were interested in communicating with the demonstrators. Nancy Franey, an administrator at St. Mary's parish in Cambridge, told GCN that she wanted people to know that not all Catholic educators share a conservative outlook in their approach to teenage sexuality. "Many of the people I've talked to [at the conference] told me to make sure that [protesters] out here know that not everyone thinks alike in the Catholic Church," she said.

"There are many of us who talk about sex with kids, and who support condom distribution," said Franey, adding, "but condom distribution should go hand in hand with the kids having a conversation about sex, choice and responsibility with someone they trust."

Franey said that she believes that "children will be saved through religion," but that religious educators must respond to the modern needs of teenagers. She added, however, that her views are controversial and professionally dangerous in the Catholic Church. "I probably won't be talked to for a long time after this," said Franey. "A lot of people think the same way as me, but they can't say it unless they are willing to lose their jobs."

—Elizabeth Yukins

Nicaragua turns back clock on sex education

NICARAGUA—President Violeta Chamorro recently began to dismantle the progressive sex education system instituted by her predecessor, Daniel Ortega. Ortega's Sandanista government had previously implemented extensive birth control and safe sex education programs in an effort to curtail the country's high rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV transmission.

According to the *Bay Area Reporter*, a San Francisco gay newspaper, Chamorro's government is replacing sex education materials with textbooks aimed at teaching biblical morality. Using a \$12.5 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Chamorro's Minister of Education, Humberto Belli, began replacing Ortega's sex education texts on March 4, the start of the school year.

"We are going to teach moral values in the schools," Belli asserted in an interview with the *Miami Herald*. He said that academic texts depicting sexual organs as part of sex education classes had been replaced, and that the new books will teach that "sexual relations have to be reserved only for marriage."

Carlos Fernando Chamorro, the publisher of the pro-Sandanista newspaper *Barricada*, has denounced the government's new approach to sex education. "What the government is doing is crazy," said Chamorro. "A quarter of the country's women become pregnant before they are adults. The Sandanista policies helped keep the country from suffering a serious outbreak of AIDS, and all that has been destroyed by the new government," he said. "It's like playing Russian roulette with the nation's young people," he added.

—Elizabeth Yukins

Calif. court rules on lesbian parenting rights

SAN FRANCISCO—In a sharp rebuff to lesbian parenting rights, a state court ruled in March that a lesbian's former lover has no custody rights to the children born during the two women's 15-year relationship.

According to the *Bay Area Reporter*, the California State Court of Appeals court ruled in *Nancy S. v. Michele G.* that Michele G. is not legally a parent, even though she is listed on each of the two children's birth certificates as their father.

The couple had been together since 1969. Their two children, who were conceived through the artificial insemination of Nancy S., were born in 1980 and 1984. The two women separated in 1985. Initially, each woman had custody of one child, but in 1988 Nancy S. decided she wanted to change the visitation procedure so that each ex-partner would have custody of both children half of the time. Michele G. opposed such a change.

Amy Oppenheimer, attorney for Michele G., said that the court chose "to take a conservative position" on parenting laws. Oppenheimer said she thought the decision would have a "tragic" impact on the children.

—Chris Nealon

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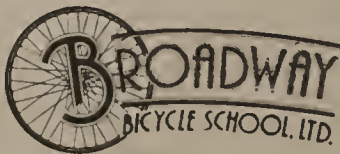
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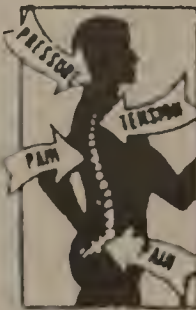
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David Scondras

‘Family Protection Act’ introduced in Boston

The proposed measure would cover domestic partnerships and extended family relationships

By Ed Boyce

BOSTON—Over 150 community activists attended a March 26 press conference at Boston City Hall where openly gay Boston City Councilor David Scondras introduced a bill that would extend city recognition to same-sex and other non-traditional relationships.

The “Family Protection Act” would amend the Boston Human Rights Ordinance by replacing the term “marital status” with the term “marital and family status.” The bill would outlaw discrimination against people because of their relationships and would allow for the registration of two types of families: “domestic partnerships,” which would include same-sex couples, and “extended family” relationships, where two or more people who are interdependent would be recognized as a family unit. The proposed measure would also provide rights usually accorded to married people—such as visitation rights in hospitals and jails—to all registered couples and families living in Boston. In addition, the bill would provide employment benefits for partners of city employees.

“This law says, for the first time, that those who choose to sign a document that binds each to each other with the responsibility to provide for each other the necessities of life, are a family and must be respected,” said Scondras.

The bill has been endorsed by the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance, the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights, the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus and a host of other civil rights groups, labor organizations and individuals.

“This is a bold first step toward gaining for lesbian and gay relationships the recognition they deserve,” said Don Gorton, co-chair of the Alliance, adding, “and make no mistake about it, this is but a first step.” Said Gorton, “Gays and lesbians are in a position to transform definitions and understandings of ‘family’ to make them more inclusive and comprehensive, and society at large will benefit.”

Scondras’ aides say they believe the measure currently has the support of six of the seven councilors needed to pass the bill. Among those who have voiced support are City Councilors Rosaria Salerno and Robert Travaglini, and President Bruce Bolling, who spoke in favor of the bill at the press conference.

“I agree that there deserves to be a level of fairness of the nature this bill provides for,” Travaglini told *GCN*. “I’m clearly leaning towards supporting it with David,” he said.

Several candidates for city council also voiced support for the measure. “Winning full recognition for lesbian and gay couples will be a dominant issue for our community in the 1990s,” said Abner Mason, an openly gay man who is running for an at-large seat on the council. Mason, who is also a member of the Coalition’s board, told *GCN*, “For too long, society has ignored or denigrated our relationships. This bill is an important first step on the road to full equality for gay and lesbian couples.”

Several people who spoke at the press conference emphasized that the bill would set

a precedent for the way municipalities (and, eventually businesses) determine eligibility benefits for people who are related to city employees.

Jackson Hall, who is also an at-large candidate for city council, praised the provisions of the bill that would extend health benefits to members of the newly defined families of city employees. “It is extremely important that we recognize all family relationships for what they are,” said Hall, adding, “However, this is not just about affirming alternative lifestyles. This is about extending health coverage to people who don’t have it and need it.”

Thomas Durand, executive vice-president of the American Federation of Government Employees—Local 1164, said, “In my work, I see the problems that have arisen in the past few years because of outdated employer policies based on an anachronistic definition of the family.” Durand described problems he has encountered, such as denial of bereavement leave and health insurance for same-sex couples and other non-traditional family situations. Given his experience, he said, he sees the Family Protection Act as a good first step toward modernizing employers’ benefits policies.

“I would like to see the private sector take the initiative on this,” said Gary Daffin, co-chair of the Caucus. “This is a time when company loyalty is not the norm. This is a time when they have a chance to offer benefits to employees that reflect the realities of the way we live.”

The leadership of the Caucus had previously urged caution with respect to the timing of introducing this bill, saying it could effect an effort to repeal the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Rights Law. However, the Caucus board voted in early April to endorse the measure. “While the ordinance introduced into Boston City Council will [only] provide financial benefits to a small number of city employees, it does provide for some very basic and simple rights for Boston residents at large,” said Daffin.

The bill and the large coalition of groups who have endorsed the measure are the results of a year-long campaign by a working group called the Committee for Family Protection and Domestic Partnership.

“It’s a loud message to lesbian and gay couples, to elderly brothers or sisters living together, to all people in this city who have made a commitment to love and care for each other that the families we have created are valid and good,” said Michael Cronin, chair of the Committee. Cronin said that the bill “is the work of an extraordinary group of women and men, young people and old people, Black people, Latino people, Asian people, white people, straight people, gay people, bisexual people who have been working for a year to fashion this ordinance to be the inclusive, wonderful piece of legislation it is.”

Scondras and the Committee for Family Protection and Domestic Partnership are encouraging people to contact their city councilor and urge support for the bill. For more information, call Jack Mills in Scondras’ office at 725-4225.

Activists win concessions from P’town official

Following months of pressure from Cape Cod gay and lesbian rights advocates, the county district attorney agrees to a new plan for handling gay bashing cases

By Elizabeth Yukins

PROVINCETOWN, Mass.—The grassroots organizing efforts of several local civil rights groups proved highly successful recently, when the county’s district attorney promised a more vigilant scrutiny of civil rights violations in gay-bashing cases.

Organizations throughout Cape Cod had joined together to protest District Attorney Philip Rollins’ reluctance to prosecute violence against lesbians and gay men as civil rights violations. Under pressure from both community groups and the state attorney general’s office, Rollins agreed March 20 to a plan that will ensure that anti-gay and -lesbian violence will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Dissatisfaction with Rollins

Opposition to Rollins developed late last summer, when several civil rights advocacy groups voiced dissatisfaction with his treatment of gay-bashing cases. A coalition of organizations, including ACT UP/Provincetown, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Cape Codders Against Racism, and the Cape and Islands Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Issues and Concerns (CLGIC), charged that Rollins’ interpretations of civil rights laws were narrow and exclusive, and therefore detrimental to the welfare of Cape Cod’s gay and lesbian community.

The coalition demanded that Rollins forcefully prosecute hate crimes against gay men, lesbians and bisexuals using the criminal code of the state’s civil rights law. It also called on Rollins to institute training programs to sensitize county prosecutors about the civil rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

‘A three-pronged plan’

The coalition pressured Rollins through demonstrations, letters, election opposition and public forums. Cathy Kaufmann, a member of CLGIC, said that Rollins’ opponents were enormously successful in

terms of mobilization and grassroots political pressure. “I’ve been on the Cape for eight years now, and I’ve never seen Rollins get so shaken over an issue as he did over this gay-bashing agitation,” she told *GCN*.

John Perry Ryan, a member of ACT UP/Provincetown, agreed that it was the community outcry that finally compelled Rollins to announce a new approach to handling hate-crimes cases.

On March 20, Rollins met with Robert Cole, of the attorney general’s civil rights division office, and Mike Duffy, of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, to discuss the prosecution of anti-gay and -lesbian violence. Following the meeting, Rollins announced the implementation of “a three-pronged plan” that will involve the Provincetown police, the attorney general and Rollins.

According to the plan, the Provincetown police department will inform both Rollins’ office and the attorney general’s office of any criminal incidents that may involve civil right violations. Both prosecuting agencies will review the incidents and, even if Rollins does not find any civil rights violations, the attorney general will have the option to prosecute the case.

“They instituted a plan that gives gay-bashing cases a wider civil rights determinant than just Rollins,” said Ryan. “Rollins knew that public pressure was mounting, and the new plan gives him a political out,” Ryan told *GCN*. “It allows him to save face: publicly he can keep his opinions about civil rights laws intact, but the controversial cases will now be prosecuted too.”

A narrow interpretation

At the heart of the debate is Rollins’ interpretation of which civil rights are extended to gay, lesbian and bisexual people. In a written statement, Rollins argues that since the state law prohibiting violence against a person based on race, color, religion or national origin does not include sexual orientation as a protected class, it can not be used to prosecute gay-bashings. He asserts

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Kowalski decision delayed again

Karen Thompson and legal observers question Judge Robert Campbell’s decision to hold additional hearings before deciding the fate of disabled lesbian Sharon Kowalski

By Chris Nealon

DULUTH, Minn.—A Minnesota judge sparked a chorus of disbelief from feminists and lesbian activists here in March, after once more delaying a decision in the case of disabled lesbian Sharon Kowalski. Although the judge, Robert V. Campbell, indicated in late 1990 that he would reach a decision by March of 1991, he heard a day of testimony on Kowalski’s case March 22. This is the second time in five months that Campbell has held additional testimony in Kowalski’s case. The issue at hand is whether Kowalski’s lover, Karen Thompson, should be given custody of Kowalski.

Kowalski’s case has attracted national attention since 1983, when she suffered serious head injuries in a car accident. Since that time, Kowalski’s lover, Karen Thompson, has been battling with Kowalski’s parents for access to Kowalski and for Kowalski’s right to appropriate medical treatment.

Thompson scored a victory in 1989, when Kowalski was moved from a Hibbing, Minn. nursing home to a rehabilitation center in Minneapolis. Kowalski was moved after a 1984 decision in which the nursing home was judged to be unacceptable for Kowalski’s care. Since then, Thompson has had regular access to Kowalski.

At present, Thompson is the only person applying for custody of Kowalski. Kowalski’s father, Donald, who had previously sought custody, filed a motion in 1989 to have himself removed as his daughter’s guardian after she was moved to the Minneapolis facility. When Thompson applied for guardianship of Kowalski,

however, the Kowalskis demanded that she not be appointed. The case has been in hearings intermittently since that time. According to legal activists observing the case, virtually all of the professional testimony given during those hearings has supported making Thompson Kowalski’s guardian.

“I feel total frustration,” said Thompson. “This [latest] hearing was irrelevant.” Thompson told *GCN* that she thought the testimony at the March 22 hearing was particularly useless because the people who testified had never had contact with Thompson. “[Testimony] was from the three-and-a-half years when I was not allowed to see Sharon,” Thompson said.

She added, however, “The people were honest. They said they did not know me. One person said she saw me once in the hallway [of the medical facility].” The only negative testimony, Thompson said, was from Kowalski’s sister, Debbie, who ended her remarks by telling Thompson that she “hates” her. “It was nothing new,” Thompson said, adding that Debbie Kowalski had testified before and had said the same things.

“It just shows how vindictive these people are,” Thompson said. Meanwhile, she added, the extra day of testimony cost her approximately \$6000.

If nothing else, Thompson added, she hopes the extra testimony will finally bring the case to a close. “We’re hoping for a quick decision,” Thompson said. She added that her lawyer has written to Campbell asking that he decide quickly. “The motion [for my guardianship] was filed a year ago in

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COMMUNITY VOICES

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Deadline for application: April 15, 1991

All GCN positions require commitments to lesbian/gay liberation, feminism, anti-racism, an awareness of class issues, and collective decision-making.

Salary/Benefits: All positions pay \$215/week and include health/life insurance through Harvard Community Health Plan, sick leave, and four weeks paid vacation. GCN offers staff members responsibility for their own jobs, with flexibility and ample room for innovation.

To apply: Please send resume and cover letter to: GCN Job Search Committee, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

GCN EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

The "Community Voices" and "Speaking Out" sections in GCN are parts of our efforts to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed within our pages. We welcome all contributions except personal attacks. Copies of letters and "Speaking Out" contributions sent elsewhere are printed on a space available basis only. GCN reserves the right to edit letters and "Speaking Out" contributions for length and clarity, in consultation with the author. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN staff or membership.

All letters and "Speaking Out" contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. "Speaking Out" contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES and require a short (one to two sentence) biographical note about the author for inclusion at the end of the article.

Because GCN wishes to encourage dialogue and a diverse representation of perspectives on the letters pages, printing of "Speaking Out" contributions received from authors who have had other "Speaking Outs" appear in GCN recently may be postponed temporarily.

For editing purposes, it is helpful to be able to contact you easily -- please enclose your name, address, and daytime phone number with your letter or article. Thanks.

The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" contributions are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN

Radical is not a fashion statement

Dear *GCN*:

On February 12 a newly formed, visibly Queer positive affinity group called S.I.C. (Sluts in Chains) participated in a civil disobedience action against the Gulf War at the Transportation Building in Boston. The target was John Kerry, who at one time had been an outspoken voice for peace but, who as soon as the fighting broke out in the Gulf, became a shamefully silent capitulator in the escalation of senseless destruction and loss of life.

A self-censored media attempted to silence an active, huge and growing anti-war movement. Kerry ignored large numbers of his constituency to fall in with the yellow ribbon gagged, Miller beer drinking, racist "patriots."

Having chained ourselves to a banner and a balcony railing we maintained loud presence demanding that Kerry negotiate and sponsor a bill in Congress for an immediate ceasefire. There should be no business as usual as bombs thunder through cities and homes in the Middle East. People must also face the facts of death itself here at home as a result of this senseless military madness. Five members of S.I.C. were arrested, charged with trespass, and upon refusing to pay the system bond, spent the night in jail. March 15 we returned to court. We in the affinity group choose to represent ourselves and adhered to consensus decision-making throughout the C.D. and trial. In the end we were able to deal in a way that made us feel empowered against the system and forced "the court" to listen to our message.

Queers have forever been a presence in every movement for social justice. What is important and somewhat newer is that radical queers will now be loud and proud in our queerness as we struggle on whatever front. This stems from our recognition that our queerness is so much a part of our political consciousness, our understanding of the connectedness of oppressions including internalized oppression, and of our very spirit. Our being way out is the only way to make real our activism. For these reasons gay and lesbian and bi activists who have devoted years to peace and justice movements are now stepping up visibly as queer against war, queer against racism, queer against poverty, and imperialism, etc.

Another dynamic in our community which needs examining is our new queer activism exemplified by "Queer Nation" type direct action groups. On the positive side, queers who never before found themselves involved in things political are discovering that pride in being out need not be reserved for one Saturday each summer. Folks who have felt bored or disinterested in mainstream vote and lobby-type organizations are coming out to Queer Nation and ACT UP meetings.

While doing on-the-street, in-your-face action can feel very empowering, when not much time is spent with political analysis, these actions suffer. Many Queer Nation-type activists feel that if attention is paid to internal process, that they will have no time for action. However, it has become apparent that the lack of attention to issues relevant to many members of the "nation" has begun to cause serious problems in Boston and many other cities.

Last summer Queer Nation meetings were attended by hundreds psyched to explode into action. Recently the meetings of QN Boston are pulling in the same 30-40 folks, and the absence of communities of color as well as feminists is painfully obvious. Perhaps these groups will find ways to address the needs of these communities and realize that making the connections between all issues of oppression will strengthen our resolve and effectiveness as we act against homophobia. We will find that an inclusive analysis will serve to enrich our creative potential and make more accessible all that we hope to achieve with direct action. Inattention to these issues will surely lead to further splintering, in-fighting, and erosion of enthusiastic numbers vital to our success. Taking a bit more time to deal with one another from and through our radical vision for a better world will directly make us part of the change, not slow down the action.

Come on queers, stay loud proud active and true to all that we're fighting so hard to achieve.

Laurie Holmes
of Sluts in Chains
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Under whose law?

Dear *GCN*:

The following is a statement read at Boston Municipal court on March 15, 1991.

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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AIDS education vs. HIV identification

By Reverend Jim Roche

Watching a recent episode of Oprah Winfrey about the attempt, by some, to get the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Dental Association (ADA) to require health workers to take on an HIV test and then notify patients about their HIV status, I was scared by the ferocity of the audience. These people on Oprah were pissed, angry, and just plain out of control. It was like watching a lynch mob building up steam. They seemed convinced that every doctor's appointment, every teeth cleaning, every minor accident or injury they suffered presented an opportunity, a very good opportunity, for them to get AIDS.

To the audience the solution was clear. No matter how small this risk of HIV infection is, it has to be eliminated. They simply refused to hear how small the risk is, they wanted everyone, EVERYONE, they came into contact with tested. Civil rights? Forget them. Right to privacy? Screw that. Just solve this problem before we *all* get AIDS at the dentist. Test everybody so that we can know, once and for all, who all these gay people (oops, we mean *infected* people) are. Their information, values and understanding of everything from the Constitution to biology was upside down. Representative Dannemeyer has said about the crisis, "I'm here to protect the civil rights of the HIV negative." Read: *normal, straight people*.

This new call for mandatory testing (for the time being it has not been adopted by either the AMA or the ADA, but has found support in many state legislatures) is just the most recent of a number of attempts to derail AIDS education and replace it with AIDS identification. That's the important thing here, when right-wing politicians and religious leaders get involved the AIDS issue becomes not just about identifying people, but also stifling the only thing that has had any effect on the progress of AIDS so far, education. You see, to these right-wing pro-family/pro-life religious fanatics AIDS is caused not by a virus, it's caused by promiscuity. Homosexual promiscuity. To this day they absolutely believe that sex causes AIDS. What they're saying is, "We don't want to know about or discuss human sexuality, but we do want to know about your sexual orientation."

In New York City, where AIDS has infected one out of seven males in School District 1 on Manhattan's Lower East Side, there still is no comprehensive AIDS education program. The School Chancellors' recent move to to distribute condoms to students was met with such a homophobic reaction from the right wing that the program

nearly didn't pass. It was also used as a vehicle for a homophobic reaction against New York's Harvey Milk School for Gay and Lesbian Youth by members of the School Committee. Board Vice President Irene Impellizzcri attacked the program, saying its real aim was to teach "anal sex" to teenagers.

This from the Vice-President of New York City's Board of Education. What is it like elsewhere in America? In less "enlightened" communities? Others in New York marched on City Hall with placards that read "STOP FERNANDEZ FROM TEACHING OUR KIDS GAY SEX." One parent said, "Fernandez is insulting our children by telling them they cannot be educated as to what is right" and Catholic Monsignor Woolsey said that the sex education and the condom plan amounts to the "ratification of sexual promiscuity." To all of these people AIDS and sex education are still, to this day, about promoting homosexuality.

Wanting to identify people's HIV status isn't just a goal of the right wing. Criticism, I think well deserved, has also been made of our own community's handling of the issue of identification. To many of us, through actions direct and indirect, are willing to say, "screw this education shit (and the safe sex that goes with it), just tell me who these (infected) people are." Read personal ads in the gay press across the country and you'll find only a few papers which have finally, after a lot of soul searching, refused to publish ads which specify HIV status as a preference or condition within them.

What kind of people would write a personal ad that says, "HIV-negative seeks same for good times and possible relationship?" What kind of idiot would base a relationship on someone's supposed HIV status? You have to ask yourself, if someone claims they're HIV negative, would that change the way you have sex? Most say no, but really? Would it? Would knowing someone's HIV status change WHO you have sex with? Doesn't it? Talking with HIV positive friends I hear story after story of relationships that take sudden turns of direction after HIV status is revealed.

These personal ads and the way I see people behaving every day demonstrate not only our own willingness as a community to discriminate, but also the total failure of AIDS education. It isn't only the middle-aged heteros on Oprah who don't seem to understand that a negative test means shit. Their paranoid delusions about getting infected by mosquitoes, toilet seats, drinking cups, gay dentists or food cooked by gay chefs aren't too different from the denial and fantasy of gay men wanting things to be the way they were before AIDS. Responsibility-

free.

Recent statistics show an increase in unsafe sex practices in younger gay men. I hear a lot about how, "I don't have sex with anyone over 30," as if age differences made some kind of guarantee of HIV status. Even Queer Nation has come under criticism from some writers, being called the "ACT UP for HIV-negatives." At a recent meeting Queer Nation-NY members hissed as one member read a recent article from a New York magazine mentioning this apparent division. "Not us! We're not like that," people yelled. But I have to admit, while I know many Queer Nationalists who are HIV-positive, I also seem to know the HIV status of too many people to feel comfortable ignoring this criticism. Why do so many at Queer Nation tell me their own, and others', HIV status?

Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-CA) and 14 other Republicans have announced their intentions to oppose the Bush administration's proposal to allow HIV positive persons to enter the United States freely. In a letter to Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan these Republican members state that they feel dropping the policy that denies entry visas to HIV positive people would expose more Americans to HIV, cost millions to taxpayers and hamper AIDS prevention programs. Sullivan's representatives say they'll have to consider these concerns carefully. The true aim of this letter is to separate HIV-positive people and then *do something about them*.

If you don't think the country still thinks like this, read about two recent cases in Washington where men were given especially long jail terms based solely upon their HIV status. George Herbert was given life imprisonment for molesting a teenage boy, based upon his HIV-positive status, and Steven Farmer was given twice the normal sentence for paying two juveniles to pose for photographs, the judge saying the harsh sentencing was based upon the results of an illegal, forced HIV test. This, for taking photos and paying for them. Not for having sex, for which he was not convicted, but for paying the boys to pose, and having HIV himself. The court, his lawyer claimed, said it was "deliberately cruel to expose two juvenile prostitutes to AIDS."

To emphasize how this sentence was based solely on the 1) knowledge of someone's HIV status and 2) how gay-hate and AIDS-revenge mentality influenced this decision remember, in Washington State it is legal to have consenting sex with anyone more than 16 years of age. Farmer's crime? Exposing these prostitutes to the possibility of AIDS, *through photography*. Judges in Washington, by the way, are not required to attend sex

education or AIDS education classes either.

It's apparent to me that nationally AIDS education is a sham, and the total failure of these programs is evidenced by the support such plainly homophobic proposals as Dannemeyer's and that of the AMA/ADA have gotten. People still don't seem to understand AIDS and HIV infection. I'm reminded of the experience I had testifying in favor of a sex education program in Norfolk, Va. After the testimony of Marc Denma, a leader in the local gay and lesbian youth movement, about AIDS, sex education and gay teen suicide, the response from many of the adults, parents to be specific, was that if their son or daughter was gay or lesbian, they would prefer they were dead. And if they get AIDS, well, they're queer, right? Who would admit this kind of evil thought publically at a School Board Hearing? Come to Norfolk, Va., and you can meet those people in the PTA. They don't want to learn about gays and lesbians, they don't want to fight bigotry, discrimination and bias violence with education and information. They want people identified and removed. "Rubbed out" I guess you could say. To them, *we are the disease* that has to be controlled.

The opposition to sex education, AIDS education, and the rising emphasis on identification rather than education, is part of the continuing movement of genocide against gays and lesbians, the poor, IV drug users, and people of color. It is direct, out in the open. "It can't be like that," you say. But it is, and we, the gay community, are still as much a part of this genocide as everyone else. As the reported numbers of AIDS cases reaches 140,000 and heterosexual infection becomes, by the year 2000, the means of 80 percent of all AIDS cases, we find ourselves in what the American Association of Sex Educators has called a total "state of denial."

If we want to teach, we have to tell people what they don't want to hear. We have to tell them over and over again. Like it or not, the only other choice really is identifying, which would mean changing our way of life. Giving up basic freedoms and liberties, surrendering the Constitution and Bill of Rights to paranoid fears and hate-filled fantasies. But that's been Dannemeyer's and the right wing's real agenda all along.

Jim Roche is a former Unitarian minister, who contributes frequently to gay and lesbian publications. He is also a licensed therapist and a certified member of the American Association of Sex-Educators, Counselors and Therapists.

I stand before you questioning my innocence of the alleged crime of "trespassing." Yet the imperialistic actions of the President and government of this country, throughout so-called "liberations" of third world countries in the world, are never recognized by so-called leaders and justice systems as "trespassing."

Our country is still at WAR; and it started long before January of this year. This war has a history—a history based on racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism and homophobia. This war is constituted and enforced by an oppressive structure where the reality of freedom in this country is based upon race, gender, and sexuality.

I occupied a space at the Transportation Building on Tuesday, February 12, in solidarity with other individuals to raise this issue—the declaration of WAR on minority groups in this country and across the world. We hung a banner to bridge the abyss that allows the general public to remain unaware of the racist backbone of the situation in the Persian Gulf; the myriad of war-zone situations in this country, this city, this building.

There are more young men of color in prisons than there are in colleges in this country. Has the government ever questioned this as a crime? Instead, we send a disproportionate amount of men of color to the Middle East to risk death for the freedom of their country. Women in this society have the right to the ownership of their own body questioned—when often, the right to safe, legal abortion is questioned, portraying women as the property of the state, more specifically those who rule the state, most specifically, men. The war against women is a war at home.

Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people continue to fall prey to violent physical attacks, many of these attacks instigated by

our justice system and law enforcement system. We continue to be denied our human civil rights and are continually denied recognition as individuals in heterosexual society. Our morals are questioned by the church—our bodies, our love oppressed by the state. The war on Faggots, Dykes and Bisexuals is a war at home.

Over 100,000 people have died of AIDS in this country. Communities of color are disproportionately devastated by AIDS/HIV. Minority communities continue to fall prey to this pandemic and its homophobic, addictaphobic, sexist policy in dealing with the present reality that every eight minutes, someone dies of AIDS. The countless numbers of homeless in this country who are turned away at shelters due to insufficient funding—are the needs ever truly addressed in the war against poverty and homelessness? Instead, we put our funding into the destruction of homes and the murder of countless of innocent people.

So here I stand before you in question of my innocence of the alleged charge of "trespassing." With two of three of this society's status privileges non-existent—as an openly gay man of color, I ask you: what am I guilty of?

Rupert Manalili
of S.I.C.
Dorchester, Mass.

It's not over

Dear GCN:

The Miller/Marlboro boycott is not over!! Last year ACT UP/DC made two demands of Phillip Morris. They must stop contributing money to Jesse Helms and renounce their past funding of the senator. These demands were endorsed almost unanimously by AIDS and gay/lesbian groups across the country and around the

world. Neither one of these demands has been met. Phillip Morris is *still* the largest corporate contributor to Jesse Helms, our worst enemy in the U.S. Congress, and is still financing the construction of the Jesse Helms Citizenship Center in Monroe, North Carolina. The boycott will be called off when, and only when, Phillip Morris stops supporting this despicable bigot.

Phillip Morris has been claiming that the boycott is over and a few gay organizations have called off their support for the boycott, citing Phillip Morris's increased donations to AIDS organizations. There has been some disagreement among various members of the community and even among ACT UP chapters as to whether these groups should accept Phillip Morris money.

Some have argued that accepting money from Phillip Morris gives the company an opportunity to hypocritically portray themselves as a "friend" of the community, an impossibility for any corporation which donates so heavily to Helms. Others assert that Phillip Morris is a huge multi-billion dollar corporation which should be assisting AIDS organizations boycott or no boycott. They've got money, AIDS and gay/lesbian organizations need it, so why not put it to good use? Whichever of these arguments one agrees with, it doesn't change the central issue and focus of the boycott. Jesse Helms is still in office, still destroying our lives, still spreading his hate and bigotry—and Phillip Morris helped put him there.

There are signs that the boycott is working. Miller's profits fell 54 percent in the fourth quarter according to year-end financial reports. The Conservative Campaign Fund, supporters of Sen. Helms, have been harassing ACT UP/DC with a ludicrous FEC complaint in an attempt to silence those who speak out against Helms' hate. The gay/lesbian community has

demonstrated our economic clout through this boycott and corporations are starting to sit up and take notice when we send the message that we won't tolerate the funding of hate-mongers like Helms. Now is not the time to let Phillip Morris off the hook. We must continue to hold corporations responsible. There will be a demonstration outside Phillip Morris's annual shareholders meeting this April 25th in Richmond, Va. Several ACT UP members now own stock in Phillip Morris and plan to make our displeasure with the company clearly known. BOYCOTT MILLER!! BOYCOTT MARLBORO!!

Margaret Cantrell
ACT UP/DC
Washington, D.C.

APRIL FOOL'S!

Accolades (and stuff) are pouring into GCN central about *Queer Community News*, this year's April Fool's parody we published last week. Who said GCN is ham-fisted, humorless, and dull? Thanks go to the following contributors: Waltal Borawski, Michael Bronski, Jennie McKnight, Elizabeth Pincus, George Spelvin and those wacky GCN collective members.

NEA

Continued from page 1

work being branded as indecent," she told *GCN*. "Second, those [who] do apply under this vague standard will exercise self-censorship in order to avoid being branded as indecent."

Plaintiff Holly Hughes, a lesbian performance artist, said that although the wording of the decency provision is vague, "the message this language sends to artists could not be more clear: only white, straight, and middle-class artists need apply for NEA funding."

Not all arts groups, however, support the lawsuit against the NEA. Dorman said that some groups object to the suit because Frohnmayer has promised the arts community that he will not be a "decency czar," and will not invoke the decency clause to deny grant applications.

"Because Frohnmayer has pledged not to use the standard, some people are saying, 'Why not leave it alone?'" said Dorman. "These people don't want to open the possibility of making the situation worse."

According to Josh Dare, a spokesperson for the NEA, the agency has decided that its citizen review panels will provide adequate scrutiny of artists' work to ensure that no "indecent" art is funded. "There are over 1,100 civilian review panels made up of people from all over the country, representing different lifestyles and viewpoints," Dare told *GCN*. "By the nature of the panel members' diverse beliefs and backgrounds, [the NEA board] has decided that their judgment is the best way to ensure general standards of decency."

Dare added that in consideration of Congress' heated debate over the NEA's funding of controversial artwork, the undefined nature of the decency standard "seemed to be a victory." He said that the clause was acceptable not only because its implementation quelled debate in Congress and thus helped the NEA to renew its endowment until 1993, but also because it allows the NEA to exist without specific, highly conditional, content restrictions.

"The fact that we got Congress's approval without a lot of heavy restrictions is a major victory," said Dare, adding, "Many people in the arts community breathed a real sigh of relief over this."

Opponents of the decency clause, however, refuse to accept it as a political strategy to placate Congress's concerns about the NEA. They say that the NEA's reliance on the civilian review panels' decency standards gives too much power to individuals' personal biases.

"The decency provision essentially allows for new standards of censorship that go far beyond what is allowed in the law," said Ellen Yaroshetsky, another lawyer for the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression. "This puts language on the books that allows the peer review panels the free reign to decide what they want to see, irrespective of freedom of expression laws," she told *GCN*.

Yaroshetsky also said that Frohnmayer's promise not to invoke the decency standard is questionable because he has "played a wishy-washy role" throughout the arts funding controversy. "He has never taken a stand for the freedom of the arts community," she said, adding, "The 'Trust us, we're nice people' is a dangerous government ploy we've seen abused in the past."

Similarly Dorman said, "With a decency standard, Frohnmayer is potentially wielding a very powerful veto based on an extremely vague and unconstitutional" clause. "Our basic position [in the suit]," she concluded, "is that no unconstitutional restrictions on the content of the artists' work is appropriate." —filed from Boston

Ohio

Continued from page 1

from violence in their homes. The law "gives a recourse," for people, she said. "Now there is a route."

Ivy Young, director of the Families Project at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), told *GCN* she thinks the Ohio decision will help change the criteria by which courts define partnership and family. "Since *Braschi*, some courts are becoming clearer about defining families by their function rather than through some legalistic definition," said Young. "That's important."

Along with the *Braschi* decision and a few others, Young said, the Ohio ruling adds to a small but growing constellation of court cases that will broaden legal definitions of family. "It's certainly not an avalanche of decisions," she said, "but for all non-traditional families, this is an important ruling." —filed from Boston

Kowalski

Continued from page 3

August," she said. "In the name of humanity, this should get done."

Rosemary Dempsey, vice president for action at the National Organization for Women (NOW), told *GCN* that she thought Campbell's decision to hold the March 22 hearing was insensitive at best. "It's obviously [just] another barrier," she said. "It's a great strain on both the financial and emotional resources in the case."

Dempsey also said she thought Campbell was delaying the case for political reasons and not because he actually needs more evidence. "Judges will sometimes do this when they're ambivalent about a case, or when they're concerned about their decision being overturned," said Dempsey.

"But he has gone beyond his discretion here," she added. "This is close to capricious behavior on his part. At this point there's nobody contesting Karen's petition."

In addition, Dempsey said, all of the witnesses who testified March 22 have had opportunities to appear at previous hearings. "To open it up now for witnesses who never showed up the first time is bizarre," she remarked.

Perhaps the most upsetting thing about the delay, said Dempsey, are the consequences for Kowalski herself. Every legal obstacle, she said, is "clearly damaging to Sharon. She can't get the kind of day-to-day care that Karen can provide."

Thompson said she agreed that a decision is long overdue. She added that the delays have made her lose confidence. Because the facts of her case are so solid, Thompson said, the obstacles seem to be more political than legal. "My lawyer says she has never had a case this strong and still been in doubt about the outcome," said Thompson. "So here we sit, and I am none too confident that [Campbell] will appoint me guardian."

—filed from Boston

P-town

Continued from page 3

that the new gay rights law, which took effect in March 1990, makes it unlawful to discriminate or restrict a person's admission to public accommodations because of sexual orientation, but does not prohibit anti-gay and -lesbian violence.

Rollins' interpretation of the law contradicts the opinions of other district attorneys, as well as the two attorneys general who have been involved with the controversy. When opposition to Rollins first developed, the attorney general was James Shannon, who was well respected in the gay community for his pro-gay stance. Shannon was unseated in November by Scott Harshbarger, who has voiced similar support for gay rights.

Last July, Jenny Wiggins, an assistant attorney general in the civil rights division, sent Rollins a letter stating that the attorney general's office had interpreted state laws to protect gay people from violence in their use of, rather than just access to, public accommodations.

In her letter, Wiggins wrote that, "It is our position [in the attorney general's office] that heterosexual and homosexual individuals have rights defined by statute to use public accommodations (including streets) free from different treatment based on their sexual orientation."

'Agreed to be supervised'

Rollins' agreement to work with the attorney general's office represents a significant victory for Cape Cod civil rights activists. "Rollins essentially agreed to be supervised," said Mary Zepernick, a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

"The only thing we didn't win in all of this was [Rollins'] heart, and this is a problem because he still is not sending out the strong deterrent messages we need from him," Zepernick told *GCN*. "Thus we're not yet completely satisfied, but we have to recognize that we did a tremendous job of organizing the community to oppose him."

Kauffman said that the coalition groups now hope to focus attention on the anti-gay violence that occurs in other areas of Cape Cod, and will continue pressuring Rollins to implement gay rights training programs.

"We have to wait and see how effective his new plan is, and unfortunately we won't be able to tell until there's a gay-bashing," said Kaufmann. "This is grim, but it's the only way to find out how well his plan works. Until then we'll be watchdogging him, and we certainly plan to hold him accountable for all his promises," she concluded. —filed from Boston

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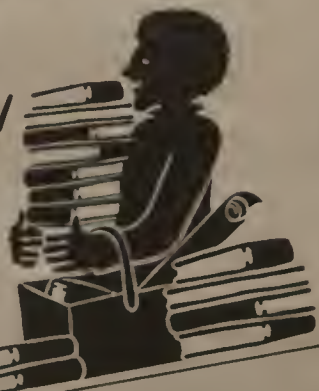
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Passion, politics and popcorn

The importance of lesbian and gay film festivals

By Michael Bronski

Oh no," a friend of mine said, as he glanced through the catalogue for The New Festival's National Gay and Lesbian 1991 Film Tour opening at the Brattle Theater in Cambridge, April 5. "I've seen all of these. They never get anything new at these festivals." He was wrong, of course. While the festival does feature some films that have had wider releases—*Desert Hearts*, *Parting Glances*, *Common Threads*, *Tongues Untied*, *Longtime Companion* and the classic *Maedchen in Uniform*—most of the 21 full-length movies and 12 shorter films will be new to Boston audiences. But my friend's immediate response—reflecting both disappointment and impatience—is understandable.

Perhaps more than any other queer cultural event, film festivals engender both the highest hopes and the most bitter discontent. Like new-found love or recreational drugs, the full potential of their promised paradise is rarely realized. Queer audiences are so diverse, with personal and political experiences sometimes so dissimilar, that it would be impossible for any 25 or 30 movies to please everyone. In a certain way, lesbian and gay film festivals are always doomed to disappoint since they can never deliver the full emotional satisfaction our lives demand.

In a talk on movies and American history at Harvard University April 1, writer Gore Vidal spoke of how film gradually took over the role that books once played in helping us interpret and view our culture. The "us" and the "our" were, in broad terms, referring to mainstream U.S. culture, but I think that the same might be said, in equally broad terms, of queer culture. Twenty five years ago the artifacts of queer culture—records, films, books—were so rare that they became precious commodities, cherished and endowed with emotional and political meaning sometimes far beyond their actual interest or worth.

While in his early twenties, my lover had older lesbian friends who collected and hoarded anything that was "gay." They had among their "archives" pulp lesbian novels set in the twilight world of Greenwich Village, records of Marlene Dietrich singing, "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face," and old, dogeared, hardcover copies of Dorothy Strachey's *Olivia*. Growing up in the '30s and '40s they had come to realize how important every little manifestation of homosexuality was, how every photo or book was a strike against invisibility and societal denial.

But it is movies that take up this function for lesbians and gay people today. Although movies, and the attendant movie star, have played an important part in helping to shape the popular imagination for the past 60 years, they once accomplished this in conjunction with books and literature. In the past two decades however, movies—along with television and that hybrid, videotape—have taken precedence as the cultural forms that shape and reflect our lives.

A lesbian and gay film festival can do many things. It can tell us about the past or how we live now. It can reflect reality through documentaries or imagine new ways of living through fictional stories. But beyond the content, and the express purpose of individual films, a festival can also expose how far we have come in depicting ourselves by documenting the specific work of a specific time, or by implication, how far we still have to go. The New Festival manages to do all of these, a great success, and then maybe a little bit more.

Viewing films such as *Days of the Greek Gods*, a documentary of Richard E. Fontaine's early '60s posing strap physique porn, or Jim Bidgood's *Pink Narcissus*, an arty Cocteau-like homo-phantasy from 1971, creates a historical frameline, a concrete reality check of how much things have changed. On the other extreme from these slightly campy, nostalgia-tinged films are movies like Monika Treut's *The Virgin Machine* and Su Friedrich's *Damned If You Don't*. The former is a fictional, semi-documentary tour through San Francisco's lesbian sex world (including a dildo lecture by Susie Bright and a dykey male impersonator who cums all over her audience with an agitated bottle of beer.) The latter is a

meditation on how lesbian sexuality is created and filtered through such films as Michael Powell's deeply erotic *Black Narcissus*. Like *Days of the Greek Gods*, one of the purposes of *The Virgin Machine* is to show us the actuality of sexual desire while both *Pink Narcissus* and *Damned If You Don't* delve into how our minds create and deploy sexual fantasy.

Films like *Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box*, *International Sweethearts of Rhythm*, *Tina and Ruby: Hell Divin' Women* (all of which detail the lives of lesbians in various forms of show business), *Comrades in Arms* (a documentary of British lesbians and gay men during World War II), or *Desire* (a look at queer sexuality in pre-Nazi Germany) not only give us a historical perspective—nothing to sneeze at in a world that negates or distorts our history—but also shows us the endless possibilities of how we might emotionally and psychologically view that history. This is particularly true of a (fictional) movie like Leotine Sagan's 1931 *Maedchen in Uniform*. In this film we respond not only to an anti-fascist parable set in an erotically charged girls' school, but to the circumstances of the film itself: it was the first film written, produced and directed by (and about) women. Here is the perfect example of how movies become history themselves, quite aside from being pieces of art.

It is impossible to look at movies like *Another Way*, a 1982 Hungarian film about politics and lesbianism, or *Novembermoon*, a 1984 German drama that details sexual politics, lesbianism and Jewish identity in occupied France, without seeing them as historical landmarks in the exploration and elaboration of queer cinema. Although this seems clear in the case of these two foreign films (which have never been shown in Boston), the same is also true of such staples of popular U.S. cinema as *Desert Hearts*, *Parting Glances* or *Longtime Companion*. Although widely screened and viewed when they premiered, it is possible to look at these movies now as part of a continuum of lesbian and gay art, and see how they have changed in light of what has come both before and after them.

At his lecture on movies and history, Gore Vidal spoke of how it used to be—before television or the VCR—when audiences would watch a film knowing that it might be the *only* time they would ever see it. There was an intensity of viewing then, a dedication of watching and listening, which he likened to the earliest days of Homeric oral tradition. In these past decades, movies have become more important in our lives but also, to some degree, more disposable. We will try to catch a film on late night television or plan to rent it when it is out on tape. But my own experience at lesbian and gay film festivals is that audiences watch these films with the same intensity that Vidal remembered of 40 or 50 years ago. Even though many of these films are (or will be) available on tape, there is something about watching the for the first or second time—and especially with an audience—that gives the experience a new layer of meaning, a new level of discovery. One thinks of that great scene in *Longtime Companion* in which seven of the characters are gathered around a TV screen waiting for the first male/male soap opera kiss. Writer Craig Lucas and director Norman Rene captured perfectly the collective anticipation and anxiety that accompanies gay people watching public manifestations and representations of gay existence.

One of the great feats of a lesbian and gay film festival is that it not only screens the movies but brings us all together as an audience. The power and potency of this group experience cannot be underestimated. It involves not just public visibility but shared emotion; not just a collective presence but a willingness to respond to both what is on the screen and to our fellow audience members'

The following interviews were conducted by Christopher Wittke



top: Scene from *Can't you take a joke?* bottom: Scene from *Pink Narcissus*

'We never get enough of us'

The huge logistical endeavor of taking the New Festival on the road

Vance Deare is the National Tour Director and Special Events Coordinator for the New Festival's National Gay and Lesbian 1991 Film Tour. He spoke to GCN from the New Festival's office in New York City.

How did the New Festival tour come about and how did you get it on the road?

Vance Deare: There was initial seed money put up for the tour through the generosity of many donors who wanted to see it happen. They were people who really believed in the New Festival and felt that due to the political climate with Jesse Helms and the attacks on the First Amendment, that this was a worthwhile endeavor to back. We're finding from city to city that we're building an audience that is supporting the tour; if you're not used to something being there, then it takes you a while to get accustomed to that. The tour is making headway and it's able to pay for itself. It's a struggle and it's a lot of work.

What was the organizing process like?

Back in late October, Susan Horowitz, the executive director of the New Festival, assembled a team of people who could put together a 12-city national tour. The idea was to create a greater visibility for gay and lesbian people and also to begin to break down the typical Hollywood stereotypes. Susan essentially assembled a team of people who came from very diverse backgrounds. We had only three months to really assemble the tour, including all the logistics. We didn't have a framework under which we could operate, like we couldn't say, "Oh yeah, there's a book on this," or "Somebody else has done this." For instance, in each city we have a host organization, and we're trying to create an affiliational network across the country. We had to create a national mailing list, which didn't exist. In essence, we're taking a localized project, the New York International Festival of Lesbian and Gay Film, and we're giving it national access. We all brought our parts together and made it happen.

How is the tour going thus far?

At the end of this spring we will have completed the first five cities of the 12-city tour and it's very important that the tour is successful. Essentially the board of directors of the New Festival has given us these first five or six cities to prove ourselves and to show that the tour can, in fact, pay for itself. It's a not-for-profit tour; however, costs are

very expensive to take something on tour across the country. Sande Zaig and Jeffrey Lunger are the tour's programming directors. We average about 10 days in each city. Seattle was the premiere city for the tour and we only did a week; a number of the films had already screened there. We gave them a very compact version of the tour that only showed premieres. We've also done Seattle, Houston, Washington, D.C., and we'll be doing Boston and Atlanta. Houston through Boston stays with the same program that we've developed for the tour. Atlanta is another exception. We'll be down there for two weeks, coinciding with the National Lesbian Conference, and we're going to do something slightly different. We'll be running two screens concurrently; one with the standard menu of films plus another with films geared primarily to a lesbian audience.

How are the cities chosen for the tour?

There are a number of components. We have to have a certain amount of technical support as well as associational support for the tour. It's a big logistical endeavor. We're screening 35mm and 16mm film. We have to be able to negotiate a good contract with theaters that can accommodate us technically. We also have to have strong host organizations that can supply a lot of volunteer power to help with our merchandising component. We also have to be able to answer questions and hand out literature. We also look at whether or not a city can support a tour of this nature for 10 days. We want to be able to make the tour available for everybody. We received hundreds of phone calls from around the country when we sent out our first press release from large and small gay organizations wondering how they could get access to it. A man called me from the University of Knoxville/Tennessee and I told him the scale the tour was designed for at this point. He said, "We wouldn't be able to provide the people to come." But, the fact is, they don't have access to quality film. Those are the people we definitely want to get to. In that case, we're going to have to do an assessment and design a tour that is maybe only for a long weekend. A lot of the cities, like Boston, already have their own lesbian and gay film festivals. We aren't trying to be rivals with our sister film festivals, so we go at an opposite schedule. We're trying to bring in as many films as we can that people don't get to see at a single clip. We've found that we've gotten a tremendous response to the tour. A woman in Washington, D.C., said, "It just gives me such tremendous happiness to be able to call my lover and say 'Let's go and see a lesbian film tonight,' and to have a whole week's worth of options to be able to do that." I think the tour provides something for everyone. We've already received a tremendous response from people in Boston and I think it's the case that we can never get enough of seeing us on the silver screen. It's not like we're just so overwhelmed with films that we can say "Any time of day I can just go and see a gay or lesbian film!" So I think it's something that's very much needed. The tour has been embraced in every city we've gone to, even the management people in the theaters have gone above and beyond the call of duty to accommodate the tour. We hope to announce the seven remaining cities very shortly, and have the whole 12-city tour wrapped up by December. □



Scene from *Desire*

‘Absolutely necessary’

Executive director Susan Horowitz discusses the artistic and political implications of the New Festival tour

How many years has the New York New Festival been taking place?

Susan Horowitz: There has been a gay and lesbian film festival on and off since 1980. I've been involved in this new incarnation, the New Festival, since 1988. At that time it was restructured and mandated itself to look at policies that had more inclusivity and challenged the way programming was evaluated. It's a difficult process but it's very rewarding. It's been growing in leaps and bounds since '88. I've been the executive director since 1989. It's been a lot of fun. It's been primarily something I took some time off to do, and I've been doing it pretty much full time as a volunteer since '89. I've been fortunate enough to get paid for it since February.

Whose idea was it to take the New Festival on the road?

I got myself in trouble [laughs]. Well, I basically have been watching the audiences in New York for several years. My roots are not so much in the film community as in the gay and lesbian activist community here in New York. When I later got involved in the festival, I saw it as a community event. I saw what it was doing for the audiences as they would walk in and out of the theaters. And I thought, "This is just absolutely necessary. Every single city and town in this country should at least have an option to experience this." I really wanted to see the tour come together and believed that it could. Of course, I wanted to take as much as possible on the road; but you always want to do more than you're currently doing. We were limited in some cases by what films we could get to include in this round of the tour. With the pressure last year with the National Endowment of the Arts and funding of "homeroetic" art and all the issues around Jesse Helms at the time, it just seemed to be a way to respond. We wanted to say, "Well, we'll go out there with or without your help and get this shown."

How many people are there in the organization?

We have 67 volunteers on a regular basis; we have two coordinators for the volunteers. We have four paid staff people, a nine-member board of directors, and we have a 15-member board of advisors that has been just wonderful and very supportive.

The filmmakers must also feel supported. What is it like for them to have their work screened in cities in which they might not ordinarily be shown?

We haven't done a poll about that specifically, but there's just never been enough coverage of this film material, so the more that we can get, the better. You can't get enough exposure. In fact, this year's theme for the New York festival is "Decent Exposure." I think that the filmmakers are always seeking broader distribution of the material. The more cities that we can take the material out to the better. We're also looking at a way to structure this for universities to make use of some of the material. We're talking with different distributors about doing that because we got a great deal of inquiry from the university systems when the call went out about the tour in general. Unlike Hollywood films, there just isn't enough distribution in this category.

Have you noticed any differences between New York audiences and those out on the road?

We're doing an audience survey in each of the cities, in order to get a good feeling for the pulse of what each of those communities is responding to positively, neutrally or negatively. We want to know what they want to see more of in terms of types of films, although there's just not enough films being made, as far as we're concerned, to fill all of those desires. Each of the cities has its own

particular slant, whether it's influenced by local politics or concerns going on at the time. There's definitely been a trend at festivals in the last decade to move toward more inclusive programming and to consider categories like women's programming, people of color programming. That's certainly been a concern we've involved ourselves with here in New York in the programming process for the last three years, and that demand continues to be present all over the country. Had we programmed in the sort of "traditional" early- to mid-'80s programming and geared the festival toward a male audience we would have been very disappointed in Seattle. There we were supported in attendance two-to-one by the women's audience. It was really fascinating. There's different reactions to different film genres in different parts of the country. It depends whether a city has been exposed to independent film, as a category, at all. We haven't really tabulated an official finding yet, though we intend to.

Are people who have basically been exposed only to more mainstream films like *Parting Glances* startled by more marginal works like that of Su Fredericks?

We've just picked up the Fredericks collection and we're adding it to the program in Boston. It's a town that really likes Su's work and I think it will respond well. We have, in some cases, been influenced by suggestions from the local community as to what people might want to see if we were considering what I call "contemporary retrospective" programming. We also considered whether or not the community had runs in the past of any of the films. *Parting Glances* seems to have unending audiences; it's one of the retrospective films that people come to see over and over again. It just speaks to the film itself. Video also definitely has an affect on whether people come to see a film at the festival, although, I still think people come out for viewing in the context of the community event and to see it on the big screen versus the television screen.

The festival climate must affect lesbian and gay film in general. Do you think it is an impetus to make films? And what about the impact of artists who are choosing to work in the less-costly medium of video?

I'm not a filmmaker, I'm an exhibitor, so its hard to speak from [a filmmaker's] point of view. Particularly in the United States, with arts funding at an all-time low and independent film at an all-time low—and then you take it down to lesbian and gay art not being particularly supported—it's clear that we're in one of the few countries where film is so poorly supported. You can look at Australia and Great Britain or any number of other countries and see a lot more support. So I think to make a conscious decision to self-identify as a lesbian or gay filmmaker and then go ahead and embark on a project that is often four of five years away from completion with very shaky funding prospects is still very much a pioneer activity. I'd hope that the festival would be the kind of support that would help them to make the decision to continue to make films because we definitely need more films. There's an abundance of subject matter, and there's a lot more material that I see emerging in the short subject category. The medium of video is certainly growing and being used a great deal more. We've brought that into play in New York and if we can bring the tour back to Boston in '92 we'd certainly consider video. It has a lot to do with the particular venue that we work with and whether or not that's possible. With these first five cities being our first step out, we were trying to make it as technically uncomplicated as possible because there were so many other internal steps to monitor and keep track of and learn. So, we definitely want to include the video track next time

around.

Does your work give you any vision of the future of independent gay and lesbian film and video?

One of the things that we're seeing this year is defining what gay and lesbian film is. It's always been an evolving process—it's certainly not stagnant—and there isn't a set way in which it's perceived. One thing that we're seeing is that a lot of lesbian and gay filmmakers are out there this year making films about things that affect their lives. So then there's the question, "Is there a gay or lesbian sensibility in that film other than dealing specifically or directly with gay or lesbian lifestyle issues or politics?" In six different instances we had material submitted that we're considering for the '91 June exhibition where the filmmakers actually appear in the films but they're not dealing with specifically gay or lesbian issues directly. There's certainly this evolving issue of gay and lesbian sensibility through the eyes of the director coming through in the work.

Do the success of such recent independent gay and lesbian films as *Poison* and *Paris is Burning* make producers and directors want to aim more for the mainstream festivals than gay and lesbian festivals?

I emerged out of the women's press movement of the '70s and have seen an evolution of press and publishing moving into the whole question: "Once something is successful, does it take you into the mainstream?" I think the temptation is there for sheer economic reasons, to be able to just pay for something on a magnitude that a film budget demands. I think that is possibly going to happen in some cases. But I hope that independent film won't be completely absorbed by the process. I'm always amazed when they talk about Hollywood films coming out and they'll test it on an audience and they'll go back and completely reshape the movie to make sure that they have good box office appeal. That isn't part of what shapes independent film.

Will the success of some lesbian and gay independent films help or hinder their more marginal counterparts?

I really do think it'll help. We're dealing with such a void and such a vacuum and such a lack that the more positive results we have are only going to advance things.

Is it hard to find films, especially from other countries?

Not particularly. There's a very strong group of independent distributors around the world who are, in most cases, dedicated to seeing that the material gets out and is available to the public. We work a lot with ministries of culture in each of these different countries as well. They are very supportive of getting the work exhibited, too. They all want to make sure that the works get shown as much as possible.

Are you worried about censorship troubles as you travel from town to town?

We didn't set out to rely on resources from the government. Right now we are relying on the box office but we hope to demonstrate the need for this kind of tour and then secure other types of funding. We know there is a need. □

The New Festival National Gay and Lesbian 1991 Film Tour will be at the Brattle Theatre. 40 Brattle St., Cambridge, April 5-14, 1991. For further information (617) 868-3416

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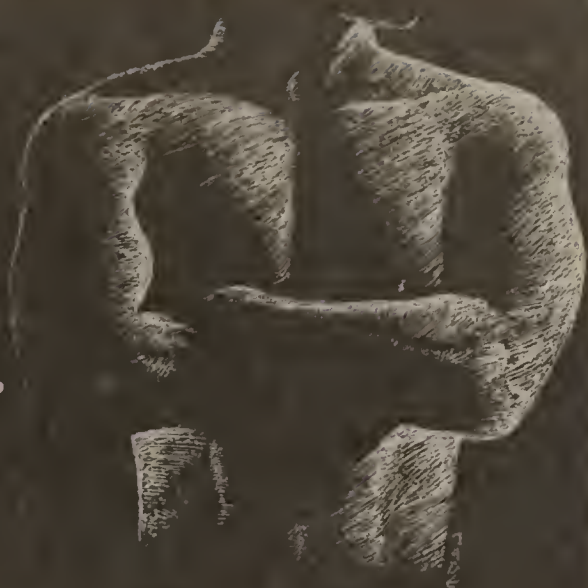


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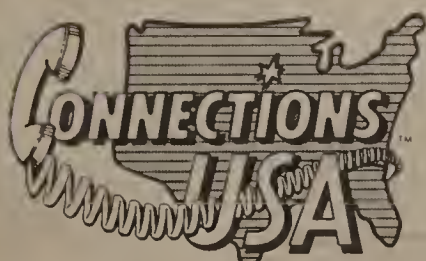
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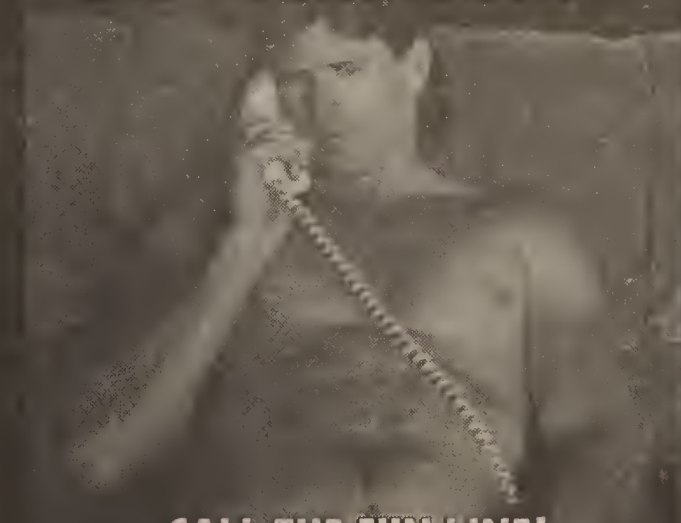
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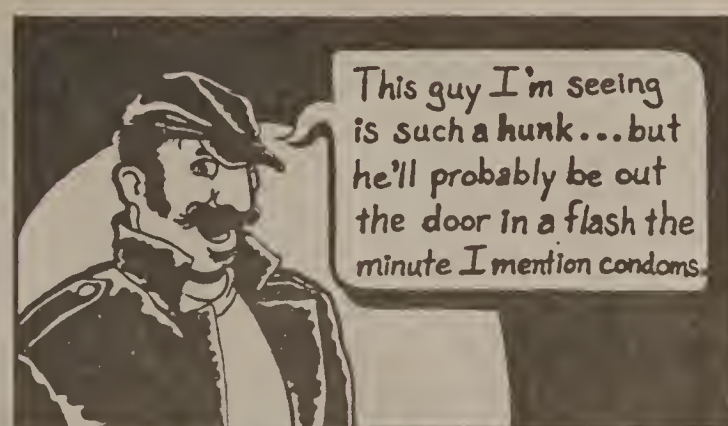


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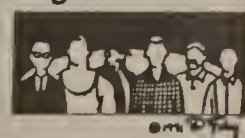
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HERE'S THE BALL-PASS IT BACK

GWM, 38, 6'1", 175, uncut, mustache, receding hair, open, out, honest, sane, sober, HIV-, secure seek drugfree friends/lover any race (love beards) Can travel, can you? RRB, Suite 197, Box 8008 Gloucester 01930 Thanx

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GCN will not publish a paper the week of April 27-May 3, 1990
Volume 18 Issue 40 will come out May 4.

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PRISONERS SEEKING FRIENDS



"Frce Heart", Gay man, 26, looking for friendship or pcn pals among gays and lesbians of all races and places. Am into poetry and stamp collecting all sorts of kinky stuff. Please write Kenny Lingar, #286652, P. O. Box 900, Shelton, WA 98584.

LOST WITHOUT YOU. To my love, Brian Reynolds, I'm lost without you baby. Always remember I do love you! Johnnie Middleton.

I would like someone to write to me...I'm 26 and like all sorts of things. Dominic McConnell, TDC II, 412280, Rte 3, Rosharon, TX 77583. My friend is a queen who doesn't get much mail and is looking for gay men or women who would like to write. He loves music and books, they call him "Little Bit." He's 22, doing 5 years. His name is David Brooks, TDC II, #553806, Rte3, Box 59, Rosharon, TX 77583. So write and find out more about us.

Black male, 46, serious minded with good sense of humor, enjoy playing chess, love animals, and would like to hear from TS or feminine gay men. Bobby Daniels, #A91393, Box 7500, C10-117, Crescent City, CA 95532.

I want to get to know more people now since I'm close to serving out my sentence. 36 yr old gay man, engineer, nice guy, formerly from CA, LA area. Like traveling, hiking, camping, all outdoor activity. Would like to write and maybe meet that special someone. Michael L. Ackerson, #78506, KSR, P.O. Box 188-78506. LaGrange, KY, 40031.

I'm not into playing any "con games." I'll write to anyone: any size, age, or race. I'm 38 but feel 16. I enjoy reading, writing, and leathercrafts. Here I sit at my typewriter, lonely and wishing I had someone to write to. James "Tommie" Manuel, #96839, Camp D'Eagle Onc, LA State Prison, Angola, LA 70712

Extremely good looking gay black inmate, 32 years old. Seeking compassionate correspondence with concerned caring men. Race unimportant. Hobbies include reading, writing, sharing thoughts. I'm a talented musician and poet. Seek sincere friend, hopefully leading to lasting intimacy. Tony Bennett 10053-014, PO Box 1000, Lewisburg, Penn. 17837

Effeminate male seeks other effeminate males for lasting relationship. Please write! Peace! Miss Tonya "Star" Jones, Box 711-N71963, Menard, IL 62259

Hi! I'm 28, and I enjoy men and women. I like sports, moonlite walks, and the arts. Robert Hatch, 049660 OAK5076, PO BOX 600, Chino, CA 91708. Be Descreat. Gay white male, 5'10, 162 lbs, 37 but look 30. I'd love to correspond with people from all area's. Eddie Jarvis #38311, Rt 2, PO Box #1-P, OCC, Fordland, MO 65652

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Black female, looking for someone to help ease the loneliness. I enjoy reading, writing, and the great outdoors. Photo for photo. Nina Jones, #484132, Rt. 4 Box 800 Mt. View, Gatesville, Texas 76528-9399

I'm looking for a female companion of any race between the ages of 25 and 45. I'm a 32 year old black women who loves to cook, write, and have a good time. Tonya Jo Burton, #174190, 3511 Bemis Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Masculine, well-built, well-endowed, intelligent gay federal prisoner seeks friendship with sincere, affectionate, mature person. Your letter answered promptly. Rodney Archambeault, RN 46789-079, Box 1700, Blk Canyon Stage 1, Phoenix, AZ 85027-9741

Bisexual seeks correspondence with other bi's or flamboyant gay malcs. Kind hearted, sincere, dedicated, sympathetic, intelligent, caring. Black, 33 years old, and soon to be paroled! Will answer all letters. Kenneth Lee Royal #AY-6879, PO Box 244, Graterford, PA 19426-0244

I would LOVE to have a penpal in the free world -- just a single person. Please write me. Have yourself a very nice day. Sylvester Ryan Addinen, #158776 Rt 2 Box 2222, Mineral Point, MO 63660.

Looking for a penpal, friendship, relationship. I'm 32 years old and serving time on a robbery charge from 1983. Eddie Anderson #35824, LCF PO Box 2, Lansing, Kansas 66043

Mixed black and Italian gay male, 24 years, looking for white male with at least 9 inches to share myself with. Feel free to send photos. Anthony Reddick, 105678 A-31, 3876 Evans Road Box 50, Polk City Florida 33868-9213

I'm a HOT gay white male, 21, and have a lot of time. I like music, reading, writing, and sex with men and women. I'm looking for a good friend. Picture of you gets mine. Eddie McFalls #158031, PO Box 500, Boydton, VA 23917

German-Italian gay boy would like to find other gay boys for friendship. I'm a karate instructor and lifeguard. Love to snuggle and play safe. I draw and am very athletic. Paul Benacci, Box 2800-40991, Lincoln, NE 68502

GWM, 25, athletic, sincere, and a hopeless romantic. I seek the support and friendship of mature well adjusted gay men who can learn as well as teach. If this is you, please write to: Jay Neill, #141128, PO Box 97, McAlester, OK 74502

CAL

14 April, Boston ♦ Preserving Our Past, Building Our Future: A benefit for the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Featuring Storme DeLarverie, Joan Nestle and Michelle Parkerson at Suffolk University, C Walsh Theatr. 55 Temple St. 4pm. \$10, \$12. Tickets at New Words, Glad Day and Crone's Harvest. Pictured (l-r) Parkerson, Nestle

Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos encouraged! Please specify if event is or is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted. Please use our format as a guide for listings. All listings must be typed. Please note that listings are printed only as space allows; we regret that we cannot print every submission. No phone calls, please! Phone numbers listed are in the 617 area code, and non-major cities are in Massachusetts, unless otherwise noted.

6 SATURDAY

Cambridge ♦ Nat'l L/G 1991 Film Tour: "Desire." 2 p.m. Other films through 4/14. See schedule on page 16. All features \$6. Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Sq. 876-6837.

Allston ♦ Split Britches and Bloodlips in "Belle Reprieve." A sendup of "A Streetcar Named Desire." 3 and 8 p.m. Also 4/3, 4, 5 and 7. Double Edge Theatre, 5 St. Luke's Rd. (one block from Commonwealth and Brighton Aves.). Tickets \$15 at door, \$13 advance: 497-1118.

Waltham ♦ WOW (Way Out in Waltham) Spring Potluck. 5:30 p.m. business mtg., 6:30 p.m. dinner. Location and info: 893-0361.

Northampton ♦ Lea Delaria in "Lesbo-a-GoGo." 4/6 and 4/7. A multi-media dyke extravaganza! Northampton Ctr. for the Arts, 17 New South St. 8 p.m. \$8 advance (at theatre box office and Lunaria bookstore), \$10 at door.

Jamaica Plain ♦ L/G Contra/Square Dancing. Smoke / drug free. 8 to 11 p.m.; beginners' lessons 7:30 p.m. First Church of J.P., corner Centre and Eliot Sts. \$5. Info and directions: Janet 522-2216, Phil 729-9206 or Scott 536-2014.

Boston ♦ Women's Coffeehouse: Laura Wood. Socialize 7 p.m.; show 8 p.m. The Center, 338 Newbury St. \$5. 247-2927.

7 SUNDAY

Allston ♦ "Belle Reprieve." 8 p.m. See 4/6.

Amherst ♦ Bagel Brunch for Jewish L/G/B. Schmooze! 10:30 a.m. Social Hall of Jewish Comm. of Amherst. (413) 256-1235.

Boston ♦ Comm. Mtg. To Discuss Proposed 1992 March on Washington. 2 to 6 p.m. Piemonte Rm., Boston City Hall, Congress St. entrance. 354-7457.

Cambridge ♦ Community Works Annual Auction. 3 to 7 p.m. Dante Alighieri Ctr., 41 Hampshire St. 423-9555.

Manchester, NH ♦ Randa McNamara and The Flirtations. To benefit Manchester YWCA's Women's Crisis Svc. and NH AIDS Foundation. 3 p.m. Palace Theatre, 80 Hanover St. \$50 (incl. champagne reception), \$20, \$15. (603) 625-5785.

Somerville ♦ GLOSS: G/L of Somerville and Surroundings. Monthly potluck. 71 Union Sq. 6 p.m. First Sunday each month. Info: Lisa, 628-2532.

Beverly ♦ North Shore L/G Parenting Support Group. First Sunday each month. First Parish Unitarian Church. 225 Cabot St. 6:30 to 8 p.m. Info: 593-5252.

Dorchester ♦ Dorchester GALA Monthly Potluck. 7 p.m. Barbara's home. Directions 525-3737 or Barry 288-1547.

Cambridge ♦ Two Nice Girls. Indigo / Nightstage, 823 Main St. 8 p.m. \$9 by phone or Ticketmaster. 497-7200.

8 MONDAY

Boston ♦ Melvin Dixon, author of "Vanishing Rooms," signs copies of his novel. 4 to 6 p.m. Glad Day, 673 Boylston St. (across from Copley library). 267-3010.

Providence ♦ Ballroom and C/W Dance Courses for L/GM and Friends: Start of Four-Week Series. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Swing Intensive. 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Texas Two-Step and Line Dance. 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., Tango and Rhumba. First Universalist Church, 250 Washington St. \$37 for four sessions. Add'l info: Jason Thomas (617) 859-9455.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Rap: "Places to Go / Things to Do in Boston." 8 to 10 p.m. Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

9 TUESDAY

Cambridge ♦ Chiltern Mtn. Club Bicycling Trip. Meet in Harvard Sq. to cycle toward Concord. Fast pace. Info: Bob 266-3812.

Boston ♦ Boston Professional Ass'n. 6 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. presentation. Tremont Hs., Tremont St. (across from Wang Ctr.). \$15, incl. dinner. 720-4119.

Boston ♦ Boston Coalition for Black L/G's. Second Tuesday each month. Harriet Tubman House, 566



LEIGH H. MOSLEY

Columbus Ave. (Mass. Ave. & Columbus). 6:30 p.m. Info: David 424-6989.

Jamaica Plain ♦ Ballroom and C/W Dance Courses for L/GM and Friends: Start of Three-Week Series. 7 to 8 p.m., Swing Intensive. 8 to 9 p.m., Advanced Latin Workshop. Firehouse Arts Center, 659 Centre St. \$30 for three sessions. Add'l info: Jason Thomas (617) 859-9455.

Arlington ♦ Parents and Friends of L/G's. Second Tuesday each month at First Parish Unitarian Church, 630 Mass. Ave. 7:15 p.m. Info: 547-2440 or (508)562-5807.

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap: "Rap on the Rap." 7 to 8:30 p.m. Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

10 WEDNESDAY

Boston ♦ Avenue C "Gay Night." A portion of the evening's cover donated to the L/G Comm. Ctr. 120 Boylston St., Theatre Dist. 247-2927.

Boston ♦ Mass. G/L Political Caucus Monthly Membership Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Arlington Street Church (use the Boylston St. entrance).

Boston ♦ Fenway Living Well Forum: "ddl, ddC and Combination Therapies." John Hancock Conf. Ctr., 40 Trinity Place (off Stuart St. between Clarendon and Dartmouth). 7 to 9 p.m. 267-0900 x287.

Boston ♦ Coming Out Support Group. The Center, 338 Newbury St. Second and fourth Wednesday each month. 8 p.m. Info: 247-2927.

Cambridge ♦ Harvard 10th Annual BGLAD Week: Andrew Holleran speaks. Boylston Hall. 8 p.m. Reception to follow. 495-5476.

11 THURSDAY

Cambridge ♦ Indigo. Half the cover donated to the G/L Comm. Ctr. 823 Main St. 247-2927.

Boston ♦ "Care Partners: Two Evenings of Info. and Discussion for Families Affected by HIV." Medical and legal info re AIDS and HIV. 4/4 and 4/11. 6 to 8 p.m. Clinical Partners Health Resource Ctr., 321 Columbus Ave. Limited space, so register: 536-5950.

Boston ♦ Pride Comm. Fundraising Mtg. Second Thursday each month. 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. business mtg. Info or volunteer packet: Pride Comm. 262-3149.

Jamaica Plain ♦ Ballroom and C/W Dance Courses for L/GM and Friends: Start of Four-Week Series. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Swing, Foxtrot and Waltz. 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Texas Two-Step and Line Dance. 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., Cha Cha, Salsa, and Mambo. Firehouse Arts Center, 659 Centre St. \$37 for four sessions. Add'l info: Jason Thomas (617) 859-9455.

Dorchester ♦ G/L Concerns Committee of SEIU Local 509. Second Thursday each month. Union office, 5 Howard Johnson Plaza. 6:30 p.m. Info: 282-2509.

Portsmouth, NH ♦ Out and About, Seacoast Lesbian Support Grp.: "AIDS." Thursdays 7 p.m. "A Safe Place," 10 Vaughn Mall Ste. 10. (603) 778-3921.

Boston ♦ "Caring For Someone With AIDS." For family, friends, and lovers caring for someone with AIDS at home. AAC and Boston Visiting Nurses Ass'n. 7 to 9 p.m. People's Baptist Church, 830 Tremont St. 437-6200 x233 or x343.

Boston ♦ GLAAD: Boston Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. General meeting second Thursday each month. The Center rm. 202, 338 Newbury St. 8 p.m. Info: 492-4639.

12 FRIDAY

Medford ♦ Anti-Gay Harassment Symposium. 12 to 3 p.m. Discussion and self-defense workshop 3 to 5 p.m. Reception 5:30. Tufts L/G/B Community. Mayer Campus Ctr. 381-3580.

Boston ♦ Bobby's Benefit for the Center. 5 to 9 p.m. int'l buffet; 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. dance. Tickets \$20 at Bobby's, Odeon, New Words, Glad Day, Crone's Harvest and Little Shop of Horrors.

Boston ♦ G/L and Friends of Suffolk U. 6 p.m. G/L Comm. Ctr., 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

Boston ♦ Friday Night Videos at the Center: "Black Widow" (popular thriller). 7 p.m. G/L Comm. Ctr. 338 Newbury. \$2.

Boston ♦ Claire McNab, author of the Det. Insp. Carol Ashton mystery series reads from "Cop Out." 7 to 8 p.m. Glad Day, 673 Boylston St. (across from Copley library). 267-3010.

Cambridge ♦ "The Wizard of Oz." Harvard 10th Annual BGLAD Week. 8 and 10 p.m. Science Ctr. "C." 495-5476.

Cambridge ♦ Harvard 10th Annual BGLAD Week: Cabaret featuring Betsy Salkind. 8 to 10 p.m. \$4. 495-5476.

Boston ♦ The Films of Jaime Humberto Hermosillo: "Shipwreck" "Looks Can Be Deceiving." Series continues 4/26. 6 and 8 p.m. Museum of Fine Arts. 267-9300 x305.

13 SATURDAY

Nashua, NH ♦ Gay 90's Costume Ball. Gay Info Line of NH. Gowns and tuxedos. Time and info: (603) 595-2650.

Vermont ♦ Chiltern Mt. Club Patriot's Day Weekend Bike Trip. The traditional first weekend of Chiltern cycling. Details: Bob 266-3812 or (802) 333-9448.

Cambridge ♦ "Lesbian and Bi Sex: Beyond Cuddling." Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 4 weeks each Saturday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. 354-8807.

Provincetown ♦ P'town Positive / PWA Coalition Singles Tea. Second Saturday each month. 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. St. Mary's of the Harbor.

Cambridge ♦ L/G Film Tour: "Sisters in Jazz." Includes "Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box," "International Sweethearts of Rhythm," and "Tiny and Ruby: Hell Divin' Women." 3:35 p.m. See 4/6, 2 p.m.

Boston ♦ Buddy's. Benefit for the L/G Comm. Ctr. 51 Stuart St. Details 247-2927.

14 SUNDAY

Boston ♦ Dykes' Dialog: Racism in the Lesbian Community. 4 p.m. The Center, 338 Newbury St. 247-2927.

Braintree ♦ GLASS: G/L Alliance of South Shore. Second Sunday each month at Unitarian Church 6-8 p.m. Info: Brett 471-7939 or Lisa 335-6085.

Boston ♦ Preserving Our Past, Building Our Future: A benefit for the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Featuring Storme DeLarverie, Joan Nestle and Michelle Parkerson at Suffolk University, C Walsh Theatre. 55 Temple St. 4pm. \$10, \$12. Tickets at New Words, Glad Day, and Crone's Harvest.

15 MONDAY

Hanover, NH ♦ Panelmaking Workshops for the AIDS Memorial Quilt. First and third Mondays each month. Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. 7 p.m. Info: Thom (603) 632-4145.

Boston ♦ Queer Nation / Boston. Community Church of Boston, Copley Square above Back Bay Bistro. 7:30 p.m., first and third Mondays each month. Info: 577-8123.

Cambridge ♦ Lesbian Rap: "Lesbian Role Models — Stories." 8 to 10 p.m. Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

16 TUESDAY

Framingham ♦ Framingham G/L Youth Group. People 22 and under, meets first and third Tuesdays each month. Civic League Bldg., 214 Concord St. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Info: write P.O. Box 426, S.Framingham, MA 01701.

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap: "Body Image." 7 to 8:30 p.m. Women's Ctr., 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Gay Fathers of Greater Boston. First and third Tuesday each month. Lindemann Center, 2nd fl. 8 to 10 p.m. Info 742-7897.

17 WEDNESDAY

Boston ♦ Downtown Lesbians Brown Bag Lunch. 12:30 p.m. Third Wednesday each month. Info: Julie 725-3562.

Worcester ♦ Supporters of Worcester Area G/L Youth. Open to g/l/b youth 21 and under. First and third Wednesday each month. United Congregational Church, 6 Institute Rd. 7p.m. Info: (508)755-0005.

18 THURSDAY

Boston ♦ "Beyond AIDS 101," an overview of AIDS and HIV. Third Thursday each month. AAC Rm. 401, 131 Clarendon St. Info: 437-6200 *264.

Boston ♦ Pride Comm. General Mtg. Third Thursday each month. 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. business mtg. Info or volunteer packet: Pride Comm. 262-3149.

Boston ♦ HIV-Negative Gay Men Discussion / Support Group. AAC and FCHC. 7 to 9 p.m. Old South Church, 645 Boylston St., 4th flr.

Portsmouth, NH ♦ Out and About, Seacoast Lesbian Support Grp. Thursdays 7 p.m. "A Safe Place," 10 Vaughn Mall Ste. 10. (603) 778-3921.

19 FRIDAY

Boston ♦ Women and AIDS: Keeping Women in Focus. A two-day conference and health fair sponsored by the Fenway Community Health Center and the Boston AIDS Consortium.

Worcester ♦ Lavender Lunch for Downtown Worcester G/L/B. Third Friday each month. Thai Orchid, 144 Commercial St. 1 p.m.

Cambridge ♦ "Poison" Boston Premiere. Two weeks, starting today 4:30 p.m. Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St. 876-6837.

Boston ♦ Friday Night Videos at the Center: "Before Stonewall" (documentary). 7 p.m. G/L Comm. Ctr. 338 Newbury. \$2.



MORGEN GWENWALD

SATURDAYS

Boston ♦ Frontrunners. Meet at Metropolitan Health Club for 2- to 5-mi. run along Charles. Lockers and showers complimentary. 10 a.m. Also: Tues. 12:15 p.m. at MHC; Wed. 6:45 p.m. at Hatch Shell. 282-0013.

Cambridge ♦ Single Mothers' Support Group. Free drop-in group with child care, alternate Saturdays. Women's Center. 46 Pleasant St. 11am-12:30 p.m. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ Pink Flamingos. TV/TS of New England. 4 to 6p.m. 338 Newbury St., 2nd flr. 247-2927.

Boston TV ♦ PrideTime — Boston G/L TV, with Jim Voltz. 7:30 p.m. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. Also on Cambridge Cable Channel 19, 7 p.m. Tuesdays, and on other systems; check your listings.

SUNDAYS

Boston ♦ Different Strokes Swim Team. Coached workouts for swimmers of all abilities. 10:15 at Boston City Hosp. swimming pool. Ed 767-0449.

Boston ♦ BAGLY Drop-In Center. (BAGLY = Boston Alliance of G/L Youth.) St. John the Evangelist Church, 35 Bowdoin. (800) 42BAGLY.

Boston ♦ Boston Strikers Soccer Club. Weekly novice and club scrimmages. All levels. 3 p.m. Info: Erik 423-0929 or Jeff 876-7612.

Boston ♦ Western Orthodox Church Mass. Arlington St. Church, 351 Boylston St. 227-5794.

MONDAYS

Boston ♦ Positive Directions. Peer-led support group for HIV+ people. Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon. 12:25 p.m. 262-3456.

Boston ♦ Monday Night Dinners for PWA's and Friends: about 100 people meeting every Monday at AAC for dinner. No reservations required. 6 p.m. AAC, 131 Clarendon St. 437-6200.

Dorchester ♦ Alcoholics Anonymous. First Parish Church, Mtg. Hs. Hill. Beginners 6:30, hardhats 8 p.m.

Worcester ♦ AIDS Project Worcester. A support group for family, friends, concerned others dealing with HIV. 305 Shrewsbury St. 7-8:30 p.m. (508)755-3773.

Cable TV ♦ "Between Takes." Often a g/l slant on events. Boston A3 Mondays 9:30 p.m. Cambridge CCTV Thursdays 8:30 p.m. Rhode Island Interconnect A Fridays 8:30 p.m. Other areas: check listings.

TUESDAYS

Providence, RI ♦ ACT UP/Rhode Island. Call for meeting place (401) 461-4191.

Boston ♦ Beantown Women's Rugby Club. Practice Tuesday and Thursday 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. until June. Info: Sue 776-1649 or Laurie 623-2341.

Cambridge ♦ 30+ Lesbian Rap. The Women's Center. 46 Pleasant St. 7-8:30. 354-8807.

Boston ♦ ACT UP/Boston. The Living Center, YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. 7 p.m. 49-ACTUP.

WEDNESDAYS

Hyde Park ♦ Women's Pick-Up Hockey. MDC Hyde Park Rink (near Dedham). 8 to 9 a.m. Info: Janice 326-1600 x350.

Boston ♦ Informal Mtg. with Mayor Flynn's Liaison to the Gay Community. Ann Sanders will be available 2 to 6 p.m. each Wednesday. The Center, 338 Newbury St. No appt. necessary, but Ms. Sanders can be reached at 725-3485.

Boston ♦ Boston Alliance of G/L Youth (BAGLY). Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons' meeting 6p.m.; women and men meet separately 6:45 to 7:30; general meeting 7:30p.m. (800) 42BAGLY.

THURSDAYS

Somerville ♦ Thursday Night Dinner Program, for people with and concerned with AIDS. Family style. Reservations requested but not necessary. Coll. Ave. Un. Methodist Church, 14 Chapel St. 6:15 sharp. 666-4130.

Boston ♦ The Coalition for L/G Civil Rights. Meets every Thursday. The Center, rm 202K. 338 Newbury St. 6:30 to 8p.m. 828-3039.

Portsmouth, NH ♦ Out and About. A lesbian social and support group. Info: Keryn (603) 749-5852.

FRIDAYS

Watertown ♦ GLOW: G/L of Watertown. 395-4664.

Boston ♦ GCN Friday Night Stuffing Party. Come stuff the paper, eat pizza and make new friends. GCN, 62 Berkeley St. 5 p.m. 426-4469.

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DANCE CLUB FOR WOMEN**

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EVERY THURSDAY AND FRIDAY UNTIL 10:30PM



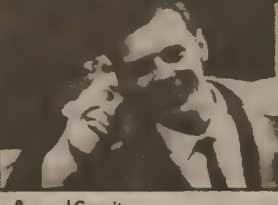
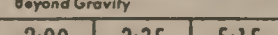
THE BEST IN LIVE ENTERTAINMENT CONTINUES:
**THIS SUNDAY!! • TWO NICE GIRLS WITH
SPECIAL GUEST BARB SCHLOFF • 8 PM**
MAY 11 • TRET FURE AND GUEST CHRIS DePINTO • 7:30 PM
JUNE 16 • THERESA TRULL AND EXTRA SPECIAL GUEST M'LISS

ALL TICKETS
ON SALE NOW

Thu 4PM-2AM, Fri 4PM-2AM, Sat 9PM-2AM, Sun 9PM 1AM
823 Main Street, Cambridge, MA 617-497-7200

24 page
New Festival
Film Tour Catalog
available at the
Brattle Theatre

FILM SCHEDULE

Fri 4/5			7:00 Comrades In Arms & Flames Of Passion	8:30 Because The Dawn & Nocturne	10:20 Pink Narcissus
Sat 4/6	2:00 Desire	3:50 November Moon	5:55 Friends Forever	7:50 Another Way	10:00 Beyond Gravity & Night Out
Sun 4/7	2:00 Maedchen In Uniform	3:50 Looking For Langston & Trojans	5:25 Coming Out	7:35 In & Out Of Love Series: 4 Films	9:30 Days Of Greek Gods
Mon 4/8			6:00 Comrades In Arms & Flames Of Passion	7:20 She Must Be Seeing Things	9:15 Tongues Untied & Flesh & Paper
Tues 4/9			6:00 Common Threads	7:35 November Moon	9:40 Desire
Wed 4/10			6:00 Another Way	8:05 The Films of Su Friedrich: 3 Films	9:55 Friends Forever
Thurs 4/11			6:00 Looking For Langston & Trojans	7:35 Because The Dawn & Nocturne	9:20 Porting Glances
Fri 4/12			6:00 Desert Hearts	7:55 Beyond Gravity & Night Out	9:50 Virgin Machine
Sat 4/13	2:00 Days Of Greek Gods	3:35 Sisters In Jazz: 3 Films	5:15 Porting Glances	7:00 Friends Forever	8:50 Because The Dawn & Nocturne
Sun 4/14	2:00 Tongues Untied & Flesh & Paper	3:45 Desire	5:35 In & Out Of Love Series: 4 Films	7:30 Coming Out	9:40 Longtime Companion

Our Special Thanks to Gay Community News for their generosity and technical assistance.

For information about
The New Festival or
to be on our mailing list,
contact our offices at
212.966.5656 or write
to us at 568 Broadway,
New York, NY 10012.



APRIL 5-14

The Brattle Theatre

40 Brattle Street, Cambridge
In The Heart of Harvard Square
(617) 868-3416

Coming Out



Looking For Langston

Opening Night Benefit, Friday, April 5, 1991

Come celebrate our Passion and our Power with The Massachusetts
Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, the Gay and Lesbian Advocates &
Defenders and The New Festival.
5PM to 7PM Cocktail Reception & Hors D'Oeuvres followed by a
screening of your choice. Call 617-262-1565 for details!

Tiny & Ruby



Passion, Politics
and Popcorn

THE NEW FESTIVAL
NATIONAL GAY
AND LESBIAN
1991 FILM TOUR